

The United States Strategic Command: A Cold War Icon

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The United States Strategic Command

A Cold War Icon

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the United States Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) in terms of its missions and structures and proposes future actions to further advance the US National Strategy of engagement and enlargement through regional stability and efficient force structure.

Historically, the Strategic Air Command (SAC) USSTRATCOM's predecessor was rooted in strategic bombing theory. The bipolar Soviet Union threat caused increased reliance on nuclear weapons for deterrence and engulfed SAC, its mission(s) and force structure including command and control and targeting which prevents financial waste and proliferation.

The Unified Command Plan (UCP) shaped command structures, as senior leadership tried to determine the correct mix of military function and regional focus, Congress emphasized regional Commander in Chiefs (CINCs) roles with the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986.

The Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact have collapsed refocusing national policy and strategy. Regional actors and regional stability will ensure protection of US vital security interests. A realignment of strategic forces and missions still left an architecture and commander (CINC) that perhaps sends the wrong global signal. But the nuclear mission is still part of a changing US deterrence strategy.

USSTRATCOM's mission is better managed by a regional CINC. Staff functions can be accomplished elsewhere. Merging USSTRATCOM with USSPACECOM can provide functional and fiscal advantages with the proper political contexts. The purpose of this study is to provide a foundation for rational thought or decision on USSTRATCOM's place in today's US command structure and national policy efforts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
Chapter	Page
1. HISTORY	1
Strategic Command	3
National Strategy	5
Single Integrated Operations Plan	6
Command and Control	6
A Command Plan	8
2. TODAY	12
USSTRATCOM	12
Threat	13
National Strategy	15
Command and Control	16
SIOP	17
New Strategic Capabilities	18
3. FUTURE	20
Continental Defense (CINCDEF)	21
USSTRATCOM Merger	21
Operations	22
Politics	23
Budget	24
4. CONCLUSION	26
Bibliography	28

INTRODUCTION

The National Security strategy of the US has changed since the fall of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries. Our policy of engagement and enlargement requires a different strategy of deterrence. Future global security, cooperation, and prosperity is dependent on de-emphasizing the nuclear weapon and reducing any perception of its requirement as a necessary element of perceived power.

The United States Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) is a Cold War icon that is assigned a vital national security mission - deterrence and nuclear readiness. The current nuclear mission and its contribution to deterrence is performed with the remnants of a Cold War infrastructure built to counter the bipolar threat of the past and is most likely maintained as a hedge against what might be the next peer competitor.

The challenge for the US is to maintain a policy and force structure which convinces emerging and building nations that nuclear might is an unnecessary element of power and still deter those capable (rogue or nation state) of using asymmetric weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The nuclear aligned USSTRATCOM force structure must provide both perceptions in today's threat environment. Strategic commands have been consumed by an overbearing nuclear role and have been separated from other means of combat power and military deterrence. USSTRATCOM currently maintains a smaller but necessary nuclear role and force Structure. Over time, the US must continue to seek new initiatives which will enhance US legitimacy as a leader in the nonproliferation role resulting in future mission and force structure changes.

Military strategies and deterrence policies of the US and the USSR resulted in an arms race which proved costly. The US drastically increased the deficit in the middle eighties and the

USSR collapsed in 1989 some would say due to its economic peril. The stability and prosperity of the economy is important for both the citizen and the military. In the 1930's, British Prime Minister Sir Stanley Baldwin put it simply when referring to the United Kingdom's dilemma of WWII involvement. "Financial strength so carefully nursed and looked after...is one of the strongest weapons we have if war ever comes upon us."¹ Some have theorized that the USSR gave up the race with the US, realizing the impending ruin of the country's economic strength.

USSTRATCOM command origins help gain an appreciation for what the command has become. In a matter of forty years, the strategic commands² changed from balanced global reach to a global nuclear effort back to a balanced global approach. Although, the nuclear mission continues to be an important part of the current military strategy, regional focus, global stability and fiscal responsibility will drive future strategy and capabilities. Reduced requirements for and perceptions of nuclear weapons as a national power tool, will change the US nuclear force, The difficulty is always the transition and the risk required to get there from here.

¹ Francis W. Hirst. Armaments: The race and the crisis. Sanderson, London. 1937. p 82

² SAC (1947) and USSTRATCOM (1992)

CHAPTER 1

HISTORY

A strategic command was originally envisioned as the military instrument capable of reaching into the bowels of the opponent and putting pressure on his sustainment and will. This concept was engulfed by the nuclear weapon and a resulting structure built on four pillars: national security and defense policy, a large nuclear force structure, a centralized targeting process, and a command and control system which prevented accidental or inadvertent use.

Strategic Command

The history of strategic commands must be traced to the first strategic command, the United States Army Air Forces Strategic Air Command. On March 26, 1946, the command was stood up with the mission to " ...be prepared to conduct long range offensive operations in any part of the World..., to conduct maximum range reconnaissance..., to provide combat units capable of intense and sustained combat operations employing the latest and most advanced weapons..."³ Two arguments exist to support the theory that the roots of this command were not based on the capability to deliver a nuclear weapon despite its employment in Japan during World War II (WWII). First, strategic bombing theory had been kicked around since the early 1900s and secondly, politicians were having a difficult time finding a place for atomic weapons in society after WWII.

Julio Douhet wrote in 1921 of the advantages of air-power. He envisioned airpower performing a strategic role because of its impact on war. The Napoleonic trinitarian war that Clausewitz embraced relied on strategy. Military strategy for the defeat of the enemy was

³ Hopkins, J.C. The Development of Strategic Air Command 1946-1986. Office of the Historian. Headquarters Strategic Air Command, Offutt. Nebraska. 1936.

evolving from an armed forces centered concept to one where a more diverse civilian populus or its leaders, entered into the calculations of the centers of gravity. Grand Strategy has always been considered the process of using resources to get one's opponent to do as you will. Bombing could affect the opponent's will by taking B.H. Liddell Hart's path of least resistance, an indirect approach. The opponents cities would be besieged without worry of the commander's loss of effort and resources in Sun Tzu's idea of the sheathed sword. Douhet believed the air arm had the ability, through bombing to strike directly at the resources of a nation before they could be applied to military purposes. The airplane could wage war in its own element and far beyond the range of surface forces."⁴ The expected effect of bombing professed by airpower enthusiasts such as Douhet was truly a strategic effect -- an unimpeded, long range compelling instrument.

The atomic bomb is viewed by many as the war ending instrument against the Japanese. There is, however, evidence that America's military victories in the Pacific, the civilian peace movement in Japan, and the employment of the atomic bomb all combined to provide a historic shift in the influence of the Imperial throne (normally only a figurehead) on Japanese politics. It created... "that unusual atmosphere in which the static factor of the Emperor could be made active...The state of affairs made an imperial conference necessary...the Emperor could do nothing but express his personal opinion ...that became...the will of the state..."⁵ The bomb may have been dropped to reduce casualties expected in upcoming invasions, although military leaders didn't think an invasion was necessary and were hardly consulted on the bomb's release. Political scientists believe Truman used the bomb to gain leverage for post-war dealings with the Soviets. General Spaatz envisioned SAC as the command "to furnish the American compliment

⁴ Louis A. Sigaud. Airpower and Unification: Douhet's principles of War and their application to the United States. Military Service Publishing Company, Pennsylvania, 1949.

⁵ Robert C. Butow. Japan's Decision to Surrender. Stanford University Press, California. 1954.

to whatever air forces the United Nations might decide to maintain"⁶. The United Nations would be the instrument of negotiation as the US demobilized after WWII.

"Nevertheless, even after the Soviet Union's first atomic test...and the completion of NSC-68.... US doctrine continued to emphasize pre-atomic concepts of strategic bombing and air superiority, defense of the homeland, and victory in a war of attrition involving conventional as well as nuclear forces."⁷

National Strategy

Use of the atomic weapon did three things: verified US capability, communicated US will and displayed weapons effects which would divide policy makers from scientists in the US. Truman viewed the bomb as another piece of artillery. Scientists were concerned about an abuse of power. Bernard Brodie's essay of 1946, *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order*, predicted the tense relationship between strategy and rapid proliferation. "Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them."⁸ In 1948, National Security Council (NSC)-30 directed that the military plan and be ready to use nuclear weapons in war. NSC-30 and the McMahon bill would launch the US on an arms buildup and culmination that included evolving deterrence theories⁹. These strategies were designed to not only deter war but to win if deterrence was not possible. Lastly, NSC-30 placed the ultimate decision of using nuclear weapons in the hands of the President. The national policy had created the new paradigm for the military strategy of SAC, from a demobilized balanced force concept to a nuclear deterrence force.

⁶ Harold B. Hinton. Air Victory: The men and machines. Harper Brothers, New York, 1948.

⁷ Brookings Institute, Security in the Nuclear Age: Developing 115 Strategy and Arms Policy. Washington, DC, 1975. p 9.

⁸ Colin Gray. Strategic Studies and Public Policy. Lexington. Kentucky. University Press of Kentucky. 1982 pp. 31-32.

⁹ Eisenhower's massive retaliation. Kennedy's flexible response. Nixon's sufficient deterrence and countervailing strategy. Reagan's peace through strength, and finally Bush's peace through disarmament.

Two important developments during the nuclear proliferation years were the Single Integrated Operations Plan (SIOP), designed to reduce targeting redundancy and the command and control system to assure the appropriate levels of decision making on nuclear employment and survival.

Single Integrated Operations Plan (SIOP)

As the Cold War progressed, General Curtis LeMay and SAC built target lists for the Emergency War Plan with little oversight from civilian leadership. Each identified Soviet target would get at least one nuclear weapon assigned to it and a category to describe the effect that any destruction of that target would have on Soviet military or industrial capabilities. The head of the Atomic Energy Commission, David Lilienthal, was surprised at the numbers of weapons required but before he could influence Truman's decisions, the Soviets exploded their first atomic weapon in 1949. Arsenals increased, strategists argued, and the intelligence infrastructure and reconnaissance platforms improved at a rapid rate, greatly increasing the number of targets available to planners. By 1960 President Eisenhower had grown suspect of the target lists of both the United States Air Force (USAF), who was standing up its first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) mission, and the Navy, who were about to sail Polaris submarines with sea-launched ICBMs or SLBM.

All Commanders in Chief (CINC) were supplying target lists with no coordination until 1955. Indecision on solving this problem ended in 1959 when JCS chairman General Nathan B. Twining proposed a single integrated plan. A Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff (JSTPS) was created to develop the US nuclear SIOP. Their primary task of the JSTPS was to eliminate duplication of targets and weapons required for a national strategic target list. SIOP-62 was

completed in December 1960 as a single massive response nuclear force. This plan would later become the responsibility of the CINC for strategic forces.

Command and Control (C2)

War is a continuation of politics and the natural tendency of war is to escalate. Nuclear weapons effects presented a powerful dilemma once the Soviets demonstrated capability.

Mistrust resulted in an arms race for survival against an opponent but it also led to a US command and control system with balances and checks. Such a system would be designed to be responsive to the perceived Soviet threat (rational) yet prevent the abdication of US policy by military men and minimize the chances for an inadvertent or irretrievable act.

The initial strategy of massive retaliation in the 1950s had three command structure requirements: a large nuclear force, excellent warning, and direct command channels. The SIOP decided numbers of weapons. Warning systems would evolve to provide some of the checks on military control. Finally, the National Security Reorganization Act of 1958 would address command relationships.

Intelligence gathering platforms were combined with a myriad of tactical and strategic warning systems (military and civilian) resulting in a vertically structured detection, analysis, and decision making command and control system. In 1957, the warning function was assigned to the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), a Canadian-US command. SAC remained the positive control authority over the bomber force (later to include missiles). NORAD strategic warnings reported to the President for decision would be separated from positive control authority at SAC, preventing hasty, military decisions. Soft command facilities were accepted because massive first strike had no survivability requirement.

President Eisenhower established direct command relationships with unified and specified commanders through the National Reorganization Act of 1958. Effectively, the chain of command ran from the President through the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) to the unified/specified commanders. Services (secretaries and chiefs) still trained and equipped the force.

The centralized command and control system changed with the advent of flexible, limited nuclear response. Survivability was mandated for systems and the command authority. Command authority was duplicated and decentralized by a system of primary command centers at unified/specified commands. Properly equipped aircraft provided airborne alternates, including the national center. Delegated authority was before or after the fact CJCS, General Twining, summed it up this way...

How will the President...elect to exercise his ultimate authority over the control of fire...however delivered? In terms of basic logic...he has only three options:

1. The President can shut his eyes and hope nothing will happen.
2. He can maintain personal control at all times..no provision for national response in event of massive damage to the seat of government.
3. He can predelegate authority to be exercised under certain grave conditions."

Despite constitutionality issues, the fact remains that "[t]he President alone can issue orders to a private in the Army to tire his rifle, but this power can be delegated downward through the long chain of command to the individual soldier. In principle, nuclear weapons are no different"¹¹

Changes to the command and control system in the 1960s included additional military hierarchy, civilian inputs to planning and execution, and the addition of survivable more communications.

Tactical nuclear weapons were provided to theater commanders in the 1970s and 80s, further

¹⁰ Nathan F. Twining. Neither Liberty Nor Safety, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. 1966, p243.

¹¹ Paul Bracken. The Command and Control of Nuclear Forces. Yale University Press. New Haven, CT. 1983, p201.

decentralizing the decision making process and resulting in ambiguous command should any one event become a trigger. Still, weapon use was highly regulated and released from the central authority of the NCA with specific mission orders required to employ. Nuclear weapons deterred because of their effects and because extensive safeguards were required to prevent abuse of such power.

A Command Plan

At the Arcadia Conference, December 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill discussed problems with command structure in the Pacific where the Japanese offensive was resisted by four nations (US, Great Britain, Australia, and Netherlands). Because of the number of allies, the mutual cooperation concept was discarded in favor of a unified commander, all forces under one operational commander, British General Wavell, who eventually reported to the Combined Chiefs of Staff.¹² The divided US Army and Navy commands in the Pacific, continued to fuel the fire after the war. The Navy believed in geographic assignment, service sovereignty, and support to a commander by cooperation. The Army was willing to subordinate to a single operational commander. Differences led General Eisenhower to propose theater unified commanders receiving strategic direction from the JCS and using forces assigned from component commands supported through separate services. On December 24, 1946, President Truman approved the Outline Plan (became the Unified Command Plan or UCP) which included seven unified geographic commands and SAC as the sole functional command under direct supervision of the JCS.

¹² Combined Chiefs of Staff consisted of the British chiefs of armed forces and members of the Joint Board to play the opposite roll of the British Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Board was responsible for supreme command, planning for all American armed forces, and in charge of developing operational strategy for the combat theaters within the American area of responsibility.

Difficult command issues remained, including nuclear forces. SAC wanted to centralize all elements and be a global commander. Admiral Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations, believed Polaris submarines should be allocated to and coordinated with other area forces, resulting in service separated systems and a SAC owned. Navy involved, Joint Strategic Target Planning System (JSTPS) responsible for the targeting of all nuclear weapons, including the SIOP.

Fearing fragmentation of SAC forces and missions which would effect SIOP timing, weight of effort, etc., a 1961 revision of the UCP deleted the emergency authority of a commander to assert operational control over forces, , etc. The attitude of 'if its not broken, why fix it' was prevalent and a diffuse force structure enhanced the survivability required for the strategy of the 1960s. This type of separate authority resulted in two air operations over Vietnam, that of theater air support and SAC's separate efforts. Poseidon submarines also had to be coordinated with movements of other friendly and enemy forces.

The US Army operations deputy suggested a relook at the command structure for strategic forces in the Biennial Review of 1982. A proposal to centralize the nuclear forces under one command was tabled -- CINC Europe (CINCEUR) and CINC Atlantic CINCLANT both opposed. CINCEUR reserved the right to use tactical nuclear forces as desired within the theater and CINCLANT declared the current command arrangement satisfactory, considering he already maintained his nuclear arsenal afloat and 'in theater'.

During the evening of November 9, 1989, East Germans began to flow through the wall of Berlin and the globe was on its way to a new world order. Earlier the next year, Lt General Lee Butler, JCS J-5, proposed a radical new look at command structure. One element of his plan was a single strategic command. Without the Soviets and the Warsaw Pact, targets for the SIOP

had sharply diminished. SAC and other nuclear force commanders searched for missions to support a new existence. US Space Command (USSPACECOM) had asserted itself as a 'strategic' command by engulfing NORAD, its warning functions, and much of the reconnaissance role previously delegated to SAC. A UCP revision established USSTRATCOM in Nebraska, replacing SAC and assigned the command elements of Air Combat Command (ACC), CINCLANT Fleet, and CINCPAC Fleet to perform the nuclear mission.

In 1993, General Colin Powell, CJCS, requested a study to determine the feasibility of USSTRATCOM absorbing USSPACECOM and its missions. Two important considerations were difficult to resolve, a political issue pertaining to Canada's partnership in NORAD and the more operational issue of mission personnel required to perform the missions. Sharp disagreements over the possible dollar savings and operating efficiency existed. USSPACECOM, in particular, believed their mission to be more currently integrated into today's battlefield and offered that USSTRATCOM be absorbed by USSPACECOM. The review was tabled, largely because the viable nuclear mission of USSTRATCOM was still a politically sensitive issue among nation states including Canada.

Although the biennial reviews of the UCP face tough issues, two of them continue to face the military and Congress since the fall of the Soviet Union, threat justification and fiscal constraints. The US is arguably the world's only superpower which leads Congress to focus more on domestic issues versus national defense- real competition in fiscal spending, butter versus guns. Today's military must correctly organize the force to accomplish the missions required to support the National Strategy.

CHAPTER 2

TODAY

Fortunately, things have changed since 1946. A new command has the responsibility for that nuclear mission and the Cold War infrastructure that came with it, although the command's assets are being drawn down under the SALT agreements and the nonproliferation initiatives. Different threats to US interests still require a nuclear mission to contribute to our deterrent policy and protect the US should other policy efforts fail. Each threat requires a different US approach in keeping with the National Strategy of engagement and enlargement. Other US missions also have true 'strategic' impact. A dedicated strategic nuclear command leaves a global perception that the US still relies heavily on that stick.

USSTRATCOM

On 6 April, 1992, a UCP revision established USSTRATCOM in Nebraska, replacing SAC and assigning elements of Air Combat Command (ACC), CINCLANT Fleet, and CINCPAC Fleet. Those elements included bombers, submarines, strategic communications and battle management assets for nuclear war.

The United States Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) is assigned a functional mission as one of the unified commands under the Unified Command Plan (UCP).

The primary mission of USSTRATCOM is to deter attack on the US and our allies and, should deterrence fail, to employ forces at the direction of the President. The command also provides specialized planning, intelligence, and operational support and expertise to regional commanders in chief. A new area of responsibility of the commander is to advise the President... on his confidence in the safety and reliability of the country's nuclear weapons inventory.¹³

¹³ Gen Eugene E. Habiger. US Strategic Command: Cornerstone of National Security. The Officer. September 1996. p 18.

To move the force structure towards compliance with SALT II¹⁴ treaty criteria, a large part of the bomber force was assigned to a conventional role in December of 1993. The 1994 Nuclear Posture Review called for limitations on the nuclear force structure¹⁵. Later in that year, all bomber platforms (B-52, B-2 and B-1) were reassigned to Air Combat Command to further facilitate the SALT agreements. Strategic missile assets have since been assigned to space and missile wings while submarines remain detached to component commanders in the oceans of the world.

Component commanders have become the keepers of the platforms. Submarines, ships, and bombers, including two reserve component units have assumed a primarily conventional role. Yet this presents a real dilemma for the regional CINC, control of forces and combat power will be lost if any platforms are chopped to CINCSTRAT. And for CINCSTRAT time is lost prosecuting his nuclear campaign if forces have to be reconstituted for the nuclear mission.

These realignments do give the perception of reduced emphasis on nuclear delivery vehicles but a remaining 'strategic' headquarters is still necessary to keep a politically sensitive nuclear issue isolated and a reminder that the Cold War paradigm is not completely dead.

The Threat

The bipolar world is gone. US focus on the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact has been replaced by major regional actors around the globe including Europe, states of the Warsaw Pact, the Former Soviet Union (FSU), Middle East, Africa, and the Pacific. Today's threat(s) can be

¹⁴

SALT agreements were US-Soviet bilateral nuclear agreements. The SALT I Treaty restricted deployment of antiballistic missiles (ABM) to one area and prohibited space based ABMs: an interim agreement froze the number of ABM launches for 5 years. SALT II (never ratified) placed ceilings on the number of nuclear delivery vehicles.

¹⁵ A 1994 Nuclear Posture Review by Sec Aspin developed a post START II force structure for 2003.

categorized as major powers, major theaters of war (MTW), troubled states, and transnational problems¹⁶.

The major powers (Russia, Japan, China), although not superpowers, are nuclear states or space powers. They are large, resource capable, and force capable. Because they are involved in the international institutions such as the United Nations (UN). US defense efforts can be complicated. The US security approach should be to create secure environments that enhance cooperative participation.

Korea and the Persian Gulf present a broad threat including weapons of mass destruction (WMD): nuclear, biological, or chemical (NBC). Any US involvement would include large forces on vulnerable territory. The potential for spillover into Israeli-Arab affairs is dangerous. Diplomatic efforts will continue to calm the Israeli-Arab friction while the US employs deterrence, with international consensus, to maintain stability in these two regions.

The end of the Cold War resulted in numerous troubled states, those struggling to find national being without big brothers or direct influence of the US or USSR. Intervention operations to assist in stability, including humanitarian operations, will be required. Peacekeeping and coalition security operations are likely engagement methods to promote democracy building in these states.

Lastly, transnational problems include non-government sponsored threats or terrorism. Negotiated agreements between legitimate governments, civilian cooperation. and host nation assistance efforts will involve the US military. The issue of force protection will be a difficult one.

¹⁶ Institute for National Strategic Studies. Strategic Assessment 1997. National Defense University Press. Washington DC, 1997.

National Strategy

The US National Military Strategy consists of component themes of peacetime engagement, deterrence and conflict prevention, and fighting and winning wars. Dr William J. Perry referred to these themes and the post-Cold War security environment as prevent, deter, and defeat.¹⁷

Preventive defense requires US leadership in the reduction of nuclear arsenals and convincing other nations to cast aside any perception of nuclear weapon leverage in diplomacy. Still, our nation's nuclear forces continue to play a role in the deterrence strategy. The President's National Security Strategy states, the US will "retain a triad of strategic nuclear forces sufficient to deter any future hostile foreign leadership with access to nuclear forces from acting against our vital interests and to convince it that seeking a nuclear advantage would be futile"¹⁸ Deterrence is still an element of the National Military Strategy. "The strategy of flexible and selective engagement comprises three tasks: remaining constructively engaged in peacetime, acting to deter aggression and prevent conflict, and fighting and winning our nation's wars when called upon." ¹⁹ "The highest priority of our military strategy is to deter a nuclear attack against our nation and allies."²⁰

US nuclear deterrence today must be effective across a broad spectrum of regional actors and potential superpowers, meeting the same goals for each regardless of political slant, economic standing, or ideological preference. For nuclear deterrence to work, an opponent's view of nuclear weapons must be rational. Robert Blackwill, Council of Foreign Relations lists..

¹⁷ Dr William J. Perry. Defense in age of Hope. Foreign Affairs. Nov. Dec 1996.

¹⁸ The White House. A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement. February, 1996. p 21

¹⁹ US Government Printing Office. National Military Strategy of the United States of America. 1995 Washington, DC. 1995. p 6.

²⁰ Ibid. p 10.

a handful of conditions that both in theory and practice increase the likelihood that the United States could deter an adversary...

1. The identity of the adversary threatening nuclear use is known
2. The adversary is rational-that is makes decisions based on reasonable calculation of the expected costs and benefits...
3. The nature of the behavior to be deterred and the commitment to punish the transgressor is carefully defined and clearly communicated by the United States.
4. The adversary believes the United States possesses both the means and the resolve to carry out its deterrent threat.²¹

To make deterrence viable, the military must have the capability to win should deterrence fail.

The difficulty is in portraying two perceptions: one of preventive deterrence and one of armed deterrence.

Command and Control

Continental C2 still involves warning through USSPACECOM, decision making at the NCA level, and a response from USSTRATCOM if nuclear forces are to be employed from the continent. The USSTRATCOM infrastructure has been fine tuned over the years for the purposes of planning, executing, coordination, intelligence, safety, and survival. A very large staff still performs the same functions as other headquarters staffs save the nuclear specific tasks.

Theater employment requires either a commander's request for forces or an independent analysis and decision by the NCA. The regional warfighter has very limited control in terms of nuclear employment.

Although, the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act strengthened the role of the unified commanders in the military chain of command and the Locher Report (President Reagan's Blue Ribbon Commission) recommendations included "...broader authority should be assigned to the unified commanders to structure subordinate commands, joint task forces, and support activities: the unified command plan should be

²¹ Robert D. Blackwill and Albert Carnesale. New Nuclear Nations. Consequences for US Policy. Council on Foreign Relations. New York. 1993, p 142.

revised..."²² The campaign plan will still be a captive of national nuclear weapons policy and employment. Ideally, a regional command authority would detect, analyze, react (decision), and survive to reach a desired end state. The military must effectively allocate and integrate the nuclear mission in regional roles. Nuclear weapons effects are colored by the Japanese experience. Properly applied, low yield nuclear weapons effects can be an effective combat tool. The CINC is in the best position to understand and put forward the US policy and should properly apply the correct instrument in time critical situations but use of nuclear weapons is a statement of policy that the President should make. However, nuclear weapons deployment and use will be by exception. The CINC will remain entrusted with proper planning, execution, safety and security. A CINC's nuclear employment decision will always be a national one.

SIOP

The goal of the SIOP was to eliminate weapons redundancy and centralize the planning process. The SIOP of yesterday is somewhat changed. The need to look at multiple weapon per target employment in specific theaters is long gone. Without the bipolar world, USSTRATCOM targeteers are challenged to identify peer competitors and decide which targets will result in a desired political, economic, or military effect.

USSTRATCOM is assigned the responsibility for assisting the regional CINCs in nuclear planning through JSTPS cells. This process has already diluted the central target planning envisioned by the original plan. Regional CINCs target the potential opponents in their AOR, and employment from the US is highly doubtful. CINC staffs can be trained to handle nuclear planning.

²² Douglas C. Lovelace Jr. Unification of the United States Armed Forces: Implementing the 1986 Department of Defense Reorganization Act. US Army War College, SSI. Pennsylvania. 1996, p 12-13.

Arms reduction talks are limiting the number of nuclear weapons a nation can employ and a SIOP cannot account for today's diverse global relationships and any changes that can and will occur as a result of real-time scenarios. The SIOP concept is designed for one kind of war, a war which is outdated in terms of national and military strategy. Other military 'weapons' are the instruments of choice today and the contingency planning of low yield nuclear weapons employment for a few select targets is not time consuming enough to maintain such a staff. If a peer competitor emerges, such as China, we know how to organize an appropriate staff and we can adjust.

New 'Strategic' Capabilities

USSTRATCOM is not the sole provider of 'strategic' capabilities. Conventional capabilities of the 1940s, bombers and missiles, are now accompanied by strategic lift assets which bring shorter range systems to the fight and assist in broader missions such as peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. The command, control, communications, and intelligence (C4I) systems provide electronic access to any infrastructure without use of force. Strategic lift capabilities are the backbone of any US response abroad. Because the US always fights the 'away game'²³, we have built our military to power project, to strategically reach abroad and maintain our national security interests, taking for granted the defense of the US homeland. It is sufficient to say that strategic missions, in the sense of their effect on the conflict, exist beyond the nuclear weapon today.

The existence of USSTRATCOM has only temporarily allowed the US to posture its nuclear forces in the US for deterrence and defense based on the current threat. Problems still

²³ Away game refers to the conflict on the soil or waters of the enemy.

exist. The future begs for less nuclear force structure in light of nonproliferation efforts.

Protection of the US must migrate away from reliance on nuclear weapons.

Finally, costly infrastructure and overhead should be reduced where possible. The more headquarters and staffs we retain, the less billets we have for the field. If our national strategy no longer hinges on a nuclear deterrence strategy and US survival from nuclear war is not in the balance, then alternatives exist to streamline the force.

CHAPTER 3

FUTURE

With such a multitude of possible threats, US national military strategy must be prioritized to encourage peaceful, democratic evolution of these regions yet maintain sufficient force to handle any major contingency. Should the US strategy of engagement and enlargement be successful at establishing regional stability across the globe, the DoD will be able to concentrate efforts more on assistance roles and presence missions, continental defense, and continued pursuit of the technological edge.

The nuclear mission must be detached from the Cold War paradigms of large yields, nuclear exchanges, and special infrastructure. The nuclear weapon's deterrent capability will play a lesser role with time. The nuclear mission must undergo the opposite transition from that of the 1940s - it must be absorbed, become subordinate, and hopefully disappear as conventional deterrence becomes more credible and attack on the US less likely

New strategic capabilities of the US should include a continental CINC. A regionally responsible CINC can provide a defensive posture, in hardware, force structure and perception, with streamlined coordination on warning and response. A sound National Missile Defense (NMD) plan for the continental US that leans forward through space could render retaliation and nuclear deterrence unnecessary. Consolidating USSTRATCOM (nuclear mission) with this regional CINC would alleviate command and control seams and reduce expensive infrastructure and staffing. There are political consequences to consider. However, tactical nuclear weapons should remain part of the arsenal and deployed on request and with consent of the NCA.

Continental Defense CINC (CINCDEF?)

Assigning a 'warfighter' (CINC) to US defense and NMD will result in more emphasis and concentrated effort to test and deploy suitable defensive systems under the constraints of our ABM Treaty obligations. The time for emphasis on US NMD is now. The dollar is not getting any cheaper. An effort similar to that driven by Sen William Cohen in 1986 to establish a special operations command is probably required to get serious about NMD. The new area of responsibility (AOR) should include a true umbrella, reaching around the globe above the regional AORs. CINCDEF can continue to support other CINCs in terms of C4I. A good argument exists for separate subunified commands to manage training/readiness and coastal operations.

If both warning and employment forces were assigned centrally to CINCDEF, the Joint Pub 3-12 concept of nuclear integration, doctrinal and procedural, could be achieved. The extended AOR then requires only coordination below the airspace if employment is exercised in conjunction with another CINCs request (supporting). Continental operations likewise should be managed by- a regional CINC capable of integrating a defense and an offense.

USSTRATCOM Merger

The USSTRATCOM mission of defense of the US would shift to CINCDEF and since large yield nuclear weapons will not deter today's, and probably not tomorrow's, actors, the rub is nuclear forces. To keep a command strictly to manage a waning force would be a waste of resources. The most logical merger is between USSPACECOM and USSTRATCOM. Political impacts include treaty implications, national command and control, basing decisions, and budget efficiencies. Operationally, regional responsibility is assigned, redundancies are eliminated, information flow is streamlined, and the force structure remains viable.

Separated nuclear operations in the US is the wrong posture. Offensive deterrence is questionable when continental employment for survival is unlikely. The US must improve on its defense against weapons use in case deterrence fails and be prepared to retaliate on the appropriate scale if necessary. That should not preclude our transition away from a nuclear weapons as conventional military capability assumes more of the deterrence mission.

Operations

Warning and response should be entrusted to a unified commander with NCA consent, funneled through the CJCS, not unlike other military responses from regional CINCs around the world today. USSPACECOM owns or integrates the warning systems and supplies a vast majority of the global reconnaissance systems. If assigned combatant command, with missile wings he would have the networks to incorporate a defense with any retaliatory capability, should that be necessary. Combining the warning and reaction staffs, streamlines the decision making process and the CINC can provide the NCA a total picture and perspective for analysis and decision. Intelligence and operations for defense and offense are collocated and result in unity of effort.

Specialized planning (JSTPS) is the only function USSTRATCOM owns that is not duplicated by another staff and it only need to move the assigned commander or reduced to provide the necessary planning functions for their CINC. Other theater planners can be trained for nuclear contingency planning just as Tactical Air Command did with wing targeteers in the 70s and 80s.

Allowing the CINC to plan the use and deployment (on request) of tactical nuclear weapons is required until those desired effects he made need can be duplicated by weapons of a

different origin. It allows for appropriate levels of planning, from campaign to targets, and shortens any crisis action planning considerations that must be accomplished. Only regional CINCs, entrusted with the responsibility for knowing and anticipating events in his theater can bring combine elements of the military power properly. Less rational opponents and less rational response with nuclear weapons is more likely than employment for survival. Regional command and control is necessary to deter asymmetric WMD responses within the theater. Nonproliferation efforts are intended to lower the use, risks and associated costs of nuclear weapons employment.

Politics

NORAD is a combined defense command of the US and Canada. Since CINC USSPACECOM is dual hatted as CINC NORAD, he effectively would have nuclear weapons under his control, at least in the short term. Canadian popular support for this is unlikely. Canada has at least three options in this scenario.

The first option would be for Canada to provide for its own defense conventionally or develop additional programs. Canada does not have the military force structure to provide their own defense and the public would probably not support a buildup in today's threat environment. Canada could rely on its NATO partners but again, the required force structure and distance to close any force is insurmountable for Canadian defense. Lastly, it could roll on the issue and follow the US requiring concessions for use of its property, personnel, or assets.

The US has the opportunity to put Canada in a tough position. The Latin American countries are very interested in aligning with the US in a defensive hemispheric or regional agreement of some kind. Negotiating a multilateral agreement using a continental based defense

architecture which downplays the nuclear weapons role as a last ditch protection mechanism for all might get results. The Canadians might balk at walking away from an agreement between the US and the Americas. Another option would be for the US to negotiate a phase out plan of the high yield nuclear weapon, contingent on world events, enhancing our efforts of nonproliferation perception of Canada, the Americas, and other global actors.

The establishment of CINCDEF sends a political message of defense, internationally and domestically. A new regional CINC, and it should be CINCDEF, aligns critical US missions under one commander and gives focus to the issue of NMD. It operationally streamlines mission tasks under that commander and concentrates one commanders efforts at a more comprehensive regional plan. Efficiencies result in reduced manpower and structure requirements may result in direct fiscal investment in a national defense system.

It is a hard fix as General Powell and the study group he commissioned to find a solution know first hand. But maybe a different approach is necessary. If regional contingencies will dominate our engagements and we have the opportunity to portray nonproliferation to other global actors, why not organize regionally, including the defense of the US. Discussions of reducing the number of CINCs based on regions circulates through present UCP and Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) meetings. To solve the strategic command issues, a regional application of the unified command effort would suffice.

Budget

Closing Offutt AFB could generate savings. Although dollar for dollar a direct comparison cannot be made, the 1995 Base Closure and Realignment Recommendations figures for Fort Ritchie, Maryland as an example, show a first year loss was \$83M but annual savings

²⁴ USGPO. Base Closure and Realignment Recommendations Costs and Savings Report. 1995.

thereafter expected at \$65M²⁴. Therefore, the closure of Offutt would cost the DoD in the short term and bring savings in the out years. However, Offutt AFB has more missions assigned to it than USSTRATCOM including the USAF Global Weather Command and the National Emergency Airborne Command. One of the Defense Finance and Accounting System (DFAS) hubs is also located at Offutt AFB.

As of September 1996, USSTRATCOM was reporting a joint staff of approximately 2,200 personnel²⁵, military and civilian. Another 100-200 personnel are reserve augmentees for the various functions. Activities include: operating the 24 hour command center, manning a backup airborne command post, tanker support requirements, and intelligence collection and analysis. The 461 intelligence personnel assigned to STRATCOM²⁶ have equally qualified intelligence counterparts at SPACECOM. STRATCOM also has over 800 personnel maintaining the communications and computer equipment at Offutt. Because USSPACECOM is largely supported by Air Force Space Command (AFSPACE), a breakout of the staff numbers for the joint activity is elusive. According to an AFSPACE fact sheet, the command has over 40,000 personnel, including intelligence, communications and computer specialists. When talking these numbers, it is difficult to believe the Joint Staff study that Gen Powell commissioned could only find 200—300 billets in savings. Communications and computer links exist between the facilities but some engineering costs for interface are probable. Use of the Offutt facility as a redundant communications server would provide an operational security alternative in the coming age of information warfare.

²⁵ Officer Magazine. US Strategic Command: Cornerstone of National Security. September 96. p 19.

²⁶ Joint Manpower Statistics. Office of the CJCSJI, 1996.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUS ION

The Cold War paradigms of threat and force structure are no longer valid in today's world of global relationships. Overarching targeting schemes and super hardened infrastructure should be behind us now. True strategic applications of the military instrument occur in many aspects of the current force from airlift to communications. Strategic effects have been achieved without the nuclear weapon, e.g.. laser guided bombs in Libya, Tomahawks in Iraq, and peacekeepers in Bosnia.

Initial efforts to reduce nuclear forces and posture due to the change in threat environment are only the beginning of what is required to convince the region and the world that nuclear leverage is unnecessary to relate or protect policy and sovereignty. A lone standing nuclear command only serves to isolate and highlight a Cold War paradigm of nuclear deterrence and maintains a staff and expensive infrastructure at headquarters level.

The future threat will continue to be more regionally based and better handled by a regional CINC, such as CINCDEF. As regions stabilize, the US will stay involved abroad but should take this opportunity to invest in continental regional stability by assigning a regional CINC to the Americas and bolstering the national and hemispheric defense. The CINC will provide that continuing interface with neighbors that is necessary to foster security relationships as well as economic ties. These actions align what we do in our own house to what we profess for Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific, providing a global perception of US interest in regional harmony and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction..

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